

# COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

## TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



### **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Davis Statement on FOIA Executive Order**

**Washington, D.C. – Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) issued the following statement today on President Bush’s Executive Order to implement changes to the Freedom of Information Act process:**

“For almost 40 years, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has ensured the public’s access to government records. The 1966 act replaced the old ‘need to know’ standard with today’s ‘right to know’ practice, placing the burden on the government to justify any need for secrecy. However, the FOIA process has recently struggled to keep up with the public’s demand for documents. Since 2002, FOIA requests have increased 71 percent. This additional volume has delayed the processing of some requests.

“Since sunshine is often the best disinfectant and timely access to records is an important part of having an open and accountable government, I worked with Congressmen Todd Platts (R-PA) and Lamar Smith (R-TX) to engage the Administration on needed reforms to the FOIA process. I’m pleased to announce that President Bush today signed an Executive Order to make FOIA operations more citizen-centric and results-oriented by requiring every agency to name a Chief FOIA Officer, establish a FOIA Requester Service Center, and identify underperforming areas and formulate a plan to implement improvements in fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

“These changes help update the 40-year old FOIA process to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Although the debate on the appropriate balance between open government and protected records will continue, as Chairman of the Committee with jurisdiction over FOIA and government information policy, I will monitor the agencies as these changes unfold to determine whether additional reform is needed. I want to personally thank President Bush for ordering these improvements and Congressmen Platts and Smith for their hard work and effort in this endeavor.”

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